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# OUT OF THE DARKNESS

What "SHE" Saw

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# Out of the Darkness

## What "SHE" Saw

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HE was a very bright little lady of some seven and a half very long summers, with only very short winters, without any cold to speak of in them. Her name was not very funny, but it meant a great deal. It was *Tsamasabeni Xingwabelana*, which, translated in the bungling manner common to foreigners, means "*Sitting-on-the-earth Littlesinger*."

Miss Littlesinger could warble like a bird, but she could not sing words very well, for there were none at all worth singing. She never saw a flag, and could not sing flag songs; nor had she ever been at school, and so she had no school songs; nor had she ever seen a book, and she had no book songs, good or bad. She was just as nearly a "blank" as a little

mortal could be; but her mind was full of energy and curiosity.

“She” came to the Mission Station one day, for she had heard that they were kind to little folks there, and she wished to learn about these very strange pale people, who could not run or walk or carry a solitary thing on their heads, but had to be carried on a donkey or in a blanket wherever they went. “She” had very observing eyes, and her visit was quite worth while.

She was told that she should enter the house and politely squeeze the right hand of every pale face she saw, all of which was unaccountable nonsense to her. At *her* home, when visitors arrived, they sat down on the ground, sometimes “tailor fashion,” sometimes much more naturally. They never had even the name for a chair at her home. After they had sat in silence a longer or shorter time, according to the dignity of their supposed relations in the tribe or nation, some one of the elder people would remark, “I have seen you.” Then the battle of words would open and the ordinary fury of human sounds continue uninterrupted as long

as they remained within hearing distance of each other.

When Miss Littlesinger arrived at the Mission, after five hours of fast walking in the earliest part of the morning, she marched right in, straight up to the missionary, who was sitting at the typewriter, thumping off something to "The Missionary Friend." She insisted on poking her freshly washed and unwiped little hand directly under the nose of said missionary, in her most energetic endeavor most properly to squeeze his right hand, according to previous instruction. This particular missionary had seen several, at least, of such little bits of interesting humanity before; so he thumped recklessly and heedlessly on to the end of his sentence.

Miss "She" thought she had blundered, and withdrew her bright little self within her smallest dimensions, waiting, trembling and very fearful, till that severe white man, with windows on his eyes, should look at her. She sat "plump down" on the floor, and began fast mixing her fingers with her toes in great trepidation, just as home children play with their apronstrings or twist a favorite

lock of hair. While she was sitting here a lady came down the stairs from somewhere in the upper regions. This was an affair calculated to arouse suspicions in the breast of little "She," who had never heard of stairs, nor a house set on top of another one. Later the lady "flew" up that passage, leaving "She" in the gravest apprehension as to where she might pop down and back again next time.

Presently something over her head got every bit of her attention. It was a long, round-faced affair and kept saying, "K-rock, k-rock!" and a big, brass eye dodged past an open place, first one side and then the other, in a manner that indicated the very close presence of a most ingenious "*mandiki*" (witch), or worse. Suddenly, and with most solemn deliberation, the thing emitted a confused, indescribable sort of sound, a little like striking a hoe with a stone, and it did it so many times that Miss "She" arose as modestly as she was able, and walked a little toward the door, and then ran as fast as her feet could fly, and they were good at it, too. Out of doors some tamed girls, much accustomed to the strange, uncommon ways of the pale

man, explained to her what it all meant, and that the missionary did not keep *mandiki* in his house, but that he hated them and would have nothing to do with them.

In time, not all in one day by any means, "She" became accustomed to the new things, and soon wished that her people had such a home. The pale man sat down to a great, big box with his wife and little girl, and they had such nice things to eat! He ate with his wife and little daughter, thinking nothing of it whatever. In fact, he seemed to miss them if they were not there, nor would he eat a mouthful till they came. They had meat and more meat, and fish and porridge, made into what they called "bread" and "cake." They could put mangoes into glass gourds, and keep them nice for months, and then take them out, and they would be as fresh as ever. "Our folks do not know how! *We* never have anything but porridge and sweet potato, 'most always just porridge alone."

Such were some of the thoughts of little Miss "She," but only a very, very few of them. The difference between her

land and ours is all the difference between heaven and earth. The Mission home is the Christian home, and most of the time it is very heavenly. Her home is the heathen home, all of the time very earthy. What makes the difference? You will not have to think five minutes before you answer, "Why, we have the Bible, and those people in Africa have n't it. We have a Sabbath and churches, and Sunday-schools and public schools, and they have none." You are right.

The little lady in question is now in our Mission, is able to read, is in school, and is fast being made over into all God wants her to be. She does not know how fast she is changing, nor how far she has changed. Perhaps the missionary knows little enough of that, but, heaven knows. Some day the little wild, black girl, who lived in a dark hut, and who ran in terror when the clock struck, will probably be a Christian teacher in some *kraal* school, helping many of Africa's bright boys and girls out of the darkness into the light.

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